

try to cloak his meaning with soft words. He even went out of his way to challenge the strong nationalists of his own party by explicitly repudiating what he called "the extreme view of nationalistic sovereignty," and by declaring that we must surrender part of our sovereignty.

Can Divinity be Bombed?

THE BOMB which fell on the palace of the emperor of Japan when 300 Superfortresses attacked Tokyo probably did not touch Hirohito. It is likely that the militarists, whose puppet he is, long ago spirited him away to a safe place outside his beleaguered capital. But they can hardly have taken him so far that he did not feel the earth-shaking impact of that missile. For the first time the supposed divinity of the ruler of Nippon failed to protect the sacred precincts of his habitation from the impious hands of a foreign enemy. Winged adversaries, coming out of the blue heavens over which his ancestress, the sun goddess, is believed to reign, destroyed at least a part of his place of residence. But they did more than that. They blasted large cracks in the myth by which a weak and inoffensive little man had become a conquering god.

If the bombing of the imperial palace means that our government has at last forsaken the company of those who grovel in superstitious respect before the world's last ruler to claim divinity for himself, it is good news. We have no grudge against the Japanese emperor as a man; and we have long ago voiced our detestation of terroristic bombing of civilian populations. But the head of the Japanese army and navy can hardly claim civilian immunity. Of course, the bombing of the palace may have been an accident, since the "pin-pointing" of targets generally occurs only in press releases. However, the broadcasting of the news by the army was not accidental. We hope it signifies that Washington has at last abandoned the delusion that the only thing that can prevent postwar Japan from plunging into red revolution is our preservation of the myth of imperial godhead.

Until now our policy has been, "Hands off the emperor." No such language as is habitually used to excoriate the heads of other enemy states has ever been applied to Hirohito. Our department of state has repeatedly denounced the "utter bestiality and brutality" of the military leaders of the Sunrise Kingdom, but it has not so much as whispered a condemnation of the man to whom army and navy officers are directly responsible. President Roosevelt appealed to the Japanese emperor to keep the peace when negotiations broke down in December 1941, but when his words were drowned in the roar of bombs dropping on Pearl Harbor, he did not denounce the figure on whose shoulders responsibility for Japan's foreign policy uniquely rests. Although all major questions of policy, both military and civilian, are cleared with the emperor and nothing is done by the government unless it carries the stamp of his approval, every reference to him by our leaders has been couched

in language which leaves the impression that they too are overawed by the synthetic mysticism with which Japanese warlords have clothed Hirohito.

The explanation of this curious attitude toward the head of an enemy state raises a great many more questions than it settles. It is acknowledged that the Japanese believe the emperor to be a god. But it is held that we should do nothing to disturb this superstition because we can use it to forestall chaos and communism. In other words, when we capture the emperor, we can use his power over the people for democratic ends just as the Japanese militarists used it for building their ill-fated empire. At the end of the war, when the militarists will be thoroughly discredited, we shall have to turn to the emperor to set up the democratic regime which must follow the present government if the world is to have peace.

This is a strange argument. It reveals complete skepticism concerning the good faith of our ally, Russia. At the same time it betrays a naive trust in our ability to exploit the supposed inviolability of the emperor who plays God. If it is accepted at its face value, it means that all our talk about world organization for peace is pure eyewash. The assumption is that the United Nations agreement concerning the postwar acceptance of joint responsibility in Europe has no counterpart for Asia. If that is true, then we shall have no peace anywhere. No formula for concord in the West will have value if the East is to become the maneuvering ground for real Machiavellianism. Peace is still indivisible, as Litvinov repeatedly pointed out at Geneva during the ebbing years of the long armistice. How frail then are its chances for life if Orient and Occident are separated and our reliance for order in Asia rests upon the maintenance of the fantastic delusion of the Japanese emperor's divinity. Surely it is not too much to hope that recent developments signify that our department of state has at last abandoned its trust in the man whom Owen Lattimore places at the head of the herd of "Japan's sacred cows."

If the government is now ready to surrender its faith in the emperor, is it too much to ask that the church screw up their courage to the point where they too will treat the Japanese people as a nation of adults? Are we still blind to the fact that the emperor cult, the central problem of Japanese life, is a religious issue? It must be dealt with by the Japanese Christian church and may no longer be dodged by the mother church in the West. It is altogether likely that the war has led Japanese Christianity into new alliances with Shintoism, but the end of the war will create a new situation. The Western Christian community must then be prepared to stand with the Japanese churches in a direct and frontal challenge to the emperor's pretensions of divinity. Without discussing the reasons which led to the evasion of this issue in the past, it is now clear that we can no longer equivocate. We have our share of responsibility for allowing the militarists to dredge the myth of imperial divinity up out of the nation's folklore and build it up into the emperor cult. We must never again permit a Japanese to doubt that this cult violates the cardinal monotheistic principle of world community. It is an insult to the intelligence of all civilized people and a

source of future war. It must be completely and finally discredited.

How can this be done? Military or diplomatic methods cannot do it, and the church is not free to use them if they could. Today no church blesses war as an instrument of national policy. Most American Christians instantly repudiated the handful of fundamentalists who call themselves the American Council of Churches when they sought to make war an instrument of missionary policy in their demand that Shinto shrines be blasted. But the end of the war will confront the churches with a duty which they can no longer escape. They must dispel forever the myth on which the emperor cult is founded. They do this only by a concerted witness to the truth. Bombs on the emperor's palace and military defeat can and will crack the myth. But neither can shatter the delusion which surrounds the emperor with a pool of absolute and irresponsible power, ready for exploitation by any clique who can gain control of the emperor's person. Only a resolute and plain-spoken witness to the truth known to all the great monotheistic faiths and known best by Christianity can do that.

The time for Christian confusion, division and eclecticism has passed. The Japanese churches have united. Unity of action and clarity of message are essential in any attempt at rapprochement to be made by the churches of the West after the war. Why the mission boards have announced no new steps in this direction in the two years during which the war has progressed from the Solomon Islands to Tokyo we can only guess. Much valuable time has been lost. And the time is pretty short to do what must be done by American mission authorities before they can cooperate abroad.

Lending Is Giving

COMMON prudence and enlightened self-interest require that America have regard for the welfare of other peoples, both now and in the postwar period. In the long run, we can be free, prosperous and secure only in a world where security, prosperity and freedom are widely distributed and fairly shared. There can be no monopoly on these benefits, and no quarantine against their opposites. This is a truism, though not on that account any the less true.

But this prudential motive is not enough. Our whole responsibility cannot be stated in terms of the higher selfishness. The dictates of humanity and of religion alike call for attitudes that cannot be wholly rationalized by the appeal to self-interest. We must be humane as well as prudent, and we must not be ashamed of generous impulses.

One cannot easily forget the withering scorn that greeted Mr. Wallace's remark that we are fighting this war to give a daily quart of milk to every Hottentot. It was a whimsical expression with a serious meaning. The phrase lent itself so well to satire and caricature that it is still brought forth periodically to illustrate the folly of trying to help anybody unless we can get something

out of it. Mr. Wallace was stating a humanitarian principle with picturesque exaggeration. But the truth is that we shall never do even the things that are necessary for our own long-range advantage unless we are willing to do some things for others from which we ourselves will derive no foreseeable benefit.

It is beginning to appear that a good working majority of the American people and of their representatives in Congress realize that the justice-and-peace-loving nations of earth have interests in common that can be served only by united action. Those voices that still shout the old slogans of "America for Americans" and "American policies for the protection of American interests and let the rest of the world take care of itself" fall harshly and unpersuasively upon the ears of intelligent citizens. There are plenty of differing opinions as to the machinery of international cooperation that should be set up and the commitments which the United States and the other nations should make to promote the common welfare without the sacrifice of legitimate national interests.

There ought to be general agreement by this time that a powerful nation such as ours must take into account three kinds of interests: (a) Those general concerns, such as the maintenance of world peace, which are of importance to all and for the sake of which the nations must cooperate for their own benefit as well as for the common benefit. (b) The improvement of the conditions, both economic and political, in the less favored parts of the world, as a matter of disinterested justice and humanitarian duty. (c) The protection of its own legitimate domestic interests.

The second of these categories might be included under the first, for no social or political injustice in any part of the world can be without its potential dangers to every other part. Yet the proof of this generalization is difficult, and its application to specific cases is often too vaguely seen to permit it to be a motive impelling to action. Not many, even of the wisest statesmen, could see that Japan's aggression in Manchuria, or Italy's in Ethiopia, or Germany's in Austria and Czechoslovakia had any sinister significance for their own countries. Yet the common moral judgment of mankind declared that they were wrong. Wise after the event, we now know that an unselfish concern for justice to the immediate victims of these aggressions would have paid off in substantial benefits to the nations not directly involved. But because they could not foresee a benefit to themselves, they did not act.

Prophecy is too uncertain to permit the anticipation of a pay-off to be the motive of generous action. To make any proposed program from which others would benefit hinge on the advance certainty of an ultimate benefit to ourselves, is doubly objectionable: it risks the chance that the selfish advantage will not be perceived clearly enough or soon enough to produce the action; and it denies the validity of the humanitarian motives which actually exist and which ought to be cultivated by recognition. We rightly scorn hypocrisy. But the danger of a hypocritical pretense of unselfishness is, for Americans, less than the danger of a cynical disavowal of it.